



**Office of the Attorney General
Paul G. Summers**

**Department of Commerce and Insurance
Commissioner Paula Flowers**

NEWS RELEASE

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**ATTORNEY GENERAL SUES FRIEDMAN'S JEWELERS FOR ALLEGED UNFAIR
AND DECEPTIVE TRADE PRACTICES**

Tennessee Attorney General Paul G. Summers today sued Friedman's, Inc., the nation's third largest jewelry chain, alleging the jewelry company has engaged in unfair and deceptive trade practices which have caused substantial consumer losses over several years. Friedman's has 560 jewelry stores in 21 states - 54 of those stores are in Tennessee.

The lawsuit, filed in Davidson County Circuit Court, alleges that Friedman's has violated the Tennessee Consumer Protection Act by charging customers for credit life, credit disability and property insurance without the consumers' knowledge and consent. The state alleges Friedman's had a practice of financing consumers' purchases and adding charges for insurance without telling customers these charges were being added to the total cost of the contract. Many consumers were unaware the insurance charges had been added to their contract. Some consumers who asked about the additional charges state that Friedman's representatives told them the insurance was required and could not be removed.

"We work hard to protect consumers and we want to make sure people know what they are

paying for and why. Everybody's money is precious to them and every penny counts," said Attorney General Paul G. Summers. "We can't allow companies to misrepresent or add terms in consumer transactions without telling them. Don't be bashful about asking questions, especially when you are getting ready to sign your name on the dotted line."

The State is asking the Court to prevent Friedman's from engaging in the alleged unlawful conduct in the future, to provide restitution to harmed consumers, for fines and for other relief.

Mary Clement, Director of the Division of Consumer Affairs, said, "Consumers should always read the contract and all its sales terms. If you are unsure about a contract term, fee or any additional charge on a contract, ask for clarification from the sales representative and make sure you get a clear explanation." Additionally, as a general rule, consumers should be aware that they should not be required to purchase any form of credit insurance in order to secure financing for a consumer transaction.

If you believe you, or anyone you know, has been a victim of an unfair and/or deceptive business practice, please contact the Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs. Complaint forms and other helpful consumer information is posted on the website at www.state.tn.us/consumer/. You may also file your complaint on-line by visiting the same website or contacting the Division at 615-741-4737 or 1-800-342-8385.